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The truth uncorked: Compromise exists on direct wine shipping in Michigan

Myth of the week:

No compromise exists on the issue of direct wine shipping in Michigan. We must either ban it altogether or open up the state to unregulated alcohol shipments.

Facts:

Compromise does exist on the issue of direct wine shipping in Michigan. Senate Bills 625-628 and House Bills 4987-4990 provide for direct shipping of limited quantities of wine to consumers, establish a means to collect sales tax from out-of-state wineries and put in place mechanisms and penalties to protect minors.

After the Supreme Court struck down Michigan's direct wine shipping laws, the state found itself at a crossroads. The state could:

- Do nothing. Since Michigan's existing law was ruled unconstitutional, Michigan consumers are now free to purchase wine directly from any winery that will sell to them.
- Ban all direct shipments of wine, taking away the rights Michigan wineries have enjoyed for more than 30 years.
- Allow direct shipping of wine to continue with careful regulations in place that protect minors and give the state a mechanism to collect taxes on wine purchases.

"Those who want to see an outright ban on direct wine shipments are working hard to convince us the only alternative to that would be a virtual 'free-for-all' of alcohol being sent through the mail," said Sen. Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelanau. "I think most people can see there's a lot of room for compromise between an outright ban and a 'free-for-all.'"

McManus is the lead sponsor of legislation that would preserve Michigan wineries' right to direct-ship their products while carefully regulating the process to ensure wine is not sold to minors and sales taxes can be collected.

"The legislation my colleagues and I have introduced addresses the issues of protecting minors and ensuring we can collect taxes on wine shipments while preserving the rights our wineries have enjoyed for more than 30 years," McManus said.

For more information on the effort to maintain Michigan's direct wine shipping rights, contact Sen. Michelle McManus' office at 517-373-1725.

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